

January 3, 2005

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING AND U.S. MAIL

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Madame Secretary,

I would like to submit the enclosed report, "Localism: Statutes and Rules Affecting Local Programming on Broadcast, Cable and Satellite Television," prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) for the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) careful consideration in the pending Localism Proceeding.

The Report documents that millions of television households in New Jersey and several other states have little or no access to broadcast television stations that serve the local needs and interests of the viewing community. While current FCC rules impose an explicit public interest obligation on broadcast licensees to serve the interests of viewers within the city of license, these rules are not enforced. Even worse, for viewers who are beyond the borders of the city of licensee, there are no explicit obligations for broadcasters to serve their local interests whatsoever.

In the absence of clear public interest obligations to serve the local interests of viewers who reside either within or outside a broadcaster's city of license, localism—the airing of programming that is responsive to the interests and needs of local communities—cannot be achieved.

I urge the Commission to consider the findings contained in this CRS Report.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Lautenberg  
United States Senator

cc: Chairman Powell  
Commissioner Abernathy  
Commissioner Copps  
Commissioner Martin  
Commissioner Adelstein